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ABSTRACT

The advent of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) has changed the way community-based organizations (CBOs) can serve unemployed youth, according to the findings of the National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) survey of CBOs; analysis of reports, surveys, and studies of the JTPA; and conversations with NYEC members and others concerned with employment of youth. This research shows that JTPA has, by design, changed the program priorities of CBOs as well as the priorities of everyone else in the employment and training field. The almost single purpose of providing trained workers for the private sector has eliminated the human resource development and human service goals that had been a part of employment and training services. JTPA has given priority to serving the job-ready or nearly job-ready; in the short run, the return on investment is greater for these people. However, younger teens, the severely disadvantaged, handicapped persons, teenage parents, and minority youths are now being served less frequently because these persons require more time and support services than those who are more acceptable to employers and thus quicker to place. Since CBOs have traditionally served these least fortunate persons, their role is changing. CBOs are being forced to function more like vocational schools and community colleges, which they are not, and then they are being criticized for being less professional, having less credentialed teachers, and using older equipment. Changes are needed, and CBOs must work together with Congress to redirect JTPA toward serving the needs of high-risk youth. (KC)

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PROGRAM EFFECTS OF JTPA ON COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

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June 5, 1984

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INTRODUCTION

The National Youth Employment Coalition was founded in 1979 by youth-serving agencies committed to the development of healthy, educated, trained, and enthusiastic young people who can compete for jobs in the American economy. The Coalition members include a broad range of this nation's youth-serving agencies and agencies that are concerned with youth employment issues and policies. The Coalition provides public information concerning ways to improve services to unemployed youth, meetings to encourage better utilization of limited resources for providing services to unemployed youth, and policy and legislative analysis related to youth employment.

At its inception, the founding organizations of the National Youth Employment Coalition, adopted a set of principles to guide the organizations. Some of these are:

- Everyone who wants to work should have the opportunity to do so.
- Too many youth are outside the economy with little hope and few skills.
- Youth employment services must be targeted to those who most need help.
- Established institutions cannot adequately serve all youth.

- A national youth policy must be established as a long-term commitment to serving youth.

For the past three years, the National Youth Employment Coalition, has been following the development and implementation of the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). The Coalition has testified before Congress and members have negotiated to deliver services on behalf of clients with Private Industry Councils, state, and local governments. Now with the support of the Ford Foundation, the Coalition has examined the effect of JTPA on community-based organizations.

This paper draws on our collective experience with JTPA, CETA, and previous employment and training programs. It is based on the findings of the National Youth Employment Coalition survey of community-based organizations, analysis of reports, surveys and studies of the Job Training Partnership Act, and conversations with NYEC members and others concerned with employment of youth.

I am especially grateful to: George Autry, MDC;

Larry Bailis; Larry Brown, 70001 Ltd.; Erik Butler, Brandeis University; Carol Gregg, Center for Population Options; Fred Jungmann, Jobs for Youth; Cheryl Lynch, Children's Defense Fund; Milton Little, InterFace, Inc.; James Reed, National Urban League; Morton Sklar, Jobs Watch Alert; Frank Slobig, Roosevelt Centennial Youth Project and Lori Strumpf, National Association of Private Industry Councils, for their thoughts and comments on the drafts of this report.

* * *

JTPA is less than two years old and its programs have been in place for less than a year. Coalition members want to know if their experience with JTPA is an isolated example or part of a larger trend. Is JTPA intended to reduce the capacity and capability of CBOs? Are CBOs in jeopardy of service, or for other reasons? Finally, what can CBOs and others concerned with the plight of severely disadvantaged youth do to focus priorities on helping those most in need?

RECOMMENDATIONS

The first year of operation of JTPA has fulfilled the Congressional intent to change CETA. The Private Industry Councils (PICs) are securing greater private-sector involvement, the states are managing the system, and placement is the primary goal of the system. Unfortunately, many people who are most in need of service are not being reached. JTPA is not serving enough high-risk youth, sixteen to nineteen year-olds, and dropouts. To reach those most in need would require more of an investment and be a greater risk for JTPA.

If JTPA is to fulfill the stated intent of Congress to serve those most in need, federal standards must be developed which encourage SDAs and PICs to serve the most needy. States need to encourage SDAs to help poor and disadvantaged youth. Information drawn from the Youth Employment Demonstration Projects Act and other youth employment program experience needs to be available to SDAs, PICs, and program operators. JTPA is clearly intended to serve disadvantaged youth and every effort must

be made to assure that it achieves this goal.

New legislative authority and additional budget authorization are needed to provide income support, work experience, additional supportive services, remedial education, skills training, on-the-job training, and other services which high-risk youth and adults need in order to compete for jobs. The JTPA structure can deliver these services. Performance standards should be incorporated, but they must be structured to encourage service to high-risk youth. To reach this population, community-based organizations need to be an integral part of the service delivery system and the national effort to gather, analyze, and disseminate information about employment and training services to program operators and planners.

JTPA needs to be amended to:

- Encourage enhanced work experience both for youths who are in school and for those who are out of school and have no work history. There is a need to assist sixteen-to-nineteen year olds to stay in school, to learn basic skills, and to be trained for work.
- Create a community work program to offer youth an expanded opportunity to work and to

allow communities and state and local governments to use their labor to provide needed services and maintain or create needed community facilities. Community work must be coupled with remedial education, training, and support services to assure that youth can compete for jobs.

- Support services must be available to youth who need help. Counseling and education to prevent unwanted pregnancies should be an integral part of programs. Day care is needed by teenage parents. Counseling can help some youth to go back to school, pursue higher education, or enter the armed forces. Remediation must be provided. Youth with no work experience need support services to make efficient use of training programs. The fifteen percent cap on support services in JTPA must be increased.

The following changes can be incorporated within JTPA without additional legislative authority:

- Target employment and training services for youth to those most in need. This nation must reduce the fifty percent unemployment rate for black youth. The states and SDAs are going to have to change priorities and design programs to meet the needs of these youth.

- Employers need information in order to encourage them to consider ways to train those most in need to meet their standards. The Targeted Jobs Tax credit is one such incentive. Training and education which continues after employment is another possible service.

- Enforce the legislative requirement that forty percent of the training resources be expended on youth.

- Utilize the "window of eligibility" provision in the law to serve high-risk youth who are not economically eligible.

- Encourage after-school work experience in part-time jobs and couple them with remedial education as an integral part of youth services.

- Require competency-based training with measurable outcomes including educational performance, school completion, acquiring a GED diploma, and enrollment in further job training or the armed services.

- Monitor competence after training and test results against the realities of the labor market.

- Make a special effort to test and implement the legislative provision for private-sector work tryouts. This change in JTPA holds great promise and could aid in placement of more disadvantaged youth.

- Give special priority to minority youth in recognition of the abnormally high level of black youth unemployment.

- Performance standards are an important part of the management system, but they should not drive the JTPA system to use placement as the single standard of success and to screen out those most in need in order to assure high levels of performance.

There is a need to broaden support of employment and training programs and to educate both employers and govern-

ment about the benefits of this investment, especially for high-risk youth. Foundation and private-sector support could help:

- Launch a public education campaign to build support for high-risk, unemployed youth. The campaign can educate the public and the youth that there is hope and that an investment of time and money can benefit both the youth and society.
- Encourage collaboration among community-based organizations, the private sector, and government. The present level of distrust leads to wasted resources.
- Support the dissemination of successful models to train high-risk youth. There is a need for more program information, program designs, model curricula, and service materials.

There are also some recommendations for community-based organizations:

- CBOs must educate the public, the private sector, and government about the needs of disadvantaged youth. We must demonstrate our capability to assist high-risk youth and show employers that these youth can be prepared to be productive workers.
- CBOs must learn to work together to lower the costs of providing services and to increase productivity.

- CBOs must learn to use computer-assisted instruction and other high technology training tools. This may require joint ventures to develop new training techniques and programs.

SERVICE TO UNEMPLOYED YOUTH UNDER JTPA

The Rockefeller, Mott, and Ford Foundations joined with the National Commission for Employment Policy to fund an independent sector assessment of the Job Training Partnership Act which was conducted by MDRC, Inc., Grinker, Walker & Associates, and the Syracuse Research Corporation. This assessment has just concluded its initial phase and it includes some interesting analyses of the effect of JTPA on services to those most in need, the population served by CBOs:

> JTPA provided training resources for about four percent of the individuals eligible; its denial of public service employment, training stipends and strict limitation on the use of work experience, and its limit on support services, made it difficult to focus the act on those less likely to gain entrance to the labor market without publicly-subsidized assistance.
>
> The result was local training plans that for the most part de-emphasized targeting JTPA towards specific groups of JTPA-eligible individuals, and focused on providing relatively short-term training and direct placement services.

Involvement of other local institutions in JTPA indicated a movement away from use of nonprofit, community-based organizations toward local colleges and small businesses. The involvement of community organizations in policymaking and service delivery had been decreasing since 1981, and under JTPA was decreasing further.

The Act's mandate to serve those "most in need" was seen by the local partners as not supported by the Act's level of resources or specific provisions, and was not an area of much interest to or expertise of the new partner, the PIC.

These observations are preliminary, but they support the impressions of the national CBOs and the NYEC survey of CBOs. The lesser involvement of CBOs, less targeting or services to those most in need, and the restrictions on stipends, supportive services, and work experience are critical limitations of JTPA.

The Job Training Partnership Act is not a refinement of CETA. It is a major policy change with different goals, different methods. We cannot expect that JTPA will alleviate the misery of the poor, lower the rate of black youth unemployment, make AFDC recipients self-sufficient, or reduce the rate of school dropouts. Through JTPA allows those activities and encourages services to AFDC recipients,

its first priority is to make the labor market function more efficiently. JTPA assures that employers have trained workers capable of meeting their needs. JTPA also mandates that this training be treated as an investment which will yield a return measured by increased earnings and reduction in welfare.

If the goal is to meet the employers need for skilled workers at the most reasonable cost, then it makes sense, given the mandate of JTPA, to select the better educated person with some job experience over the high school dropout with no work experience. This oversimplifies the change in policy, but it is fair characterization of the radical change brought about by JTPA.

It leaves unanswered the question of what are we doing to aid those who are most in need. Fairness and justice demand that we create a companion policy with legislative authority to serve those who have few skills, no money, and no hope. The American dream should be shared with everyone.

The rate of youth unemployment--particularly minority youth unemployment--gets worse with the passage of time. Black youth unemployment has grown from about thirty-five percent in 1980 to more than fifty percent in 1983 and has remained at close to fifty percent while the general unemployment rate has fallen. Of the five million jobs created during the last fifteen months of the economic upturn, less than three percent have gone to teenagers. An increasing number of young people are becoming adults without ever having held a job. This waste of human resources must be halted.

It is obvious that we need an extraordinary policy and commitment if we are going to offer hope and opportunity to minority youth. Business as usual will only result in a continuing rise in the level of black youth unemployment. As Bernard Anderson points out in the Winter, 1983, issue of Adherent, "During the 1969-70, 1973-75, 1980, 1981-82 recessions the gap between black and white unemployment widened rapidly during the economic downturn, and closed somewhat during the recovery. But the gap was always wider at the end of the recession than it was at the beginning." Minority youth cannot wait for economic

policy to improve their opportunity to participate in the labor force.

THE EFFECT OF JTPA ON SERVICES TO DISADVANTAGED YOUTH

JTPA is in its first year of implementation and data is not available to assess scientifically the effect of JTPA on services to unemployed youth. Preliminary studies suggest that there is a movement away from those most in need. JTPA is not taking risks and it is not making investments of time or services in high-risk youth.

A New England education program responded to the NYEC survey:

> The population we serve has....changed. Because of raised performance standards and lack of support services we must enroll youth who are more able to work immediately and achieve in an educational setting.

The combination of performance standards and the emphasis on quick job placement make it difficult for youth, especially sixteen and seventeen year-olds, to get jobs. Many are just too young and inexperienced to be attractive to employers. Longer term employment and training efforts

allowed these youth to mature as they were learning and allowed for work experience which gave them the opportunity to try their skills in a supportive environment prior to placement in the private sector. Performance standards need not be a deterrent to taking risks on youth, but under JTPA too many SDAs are writing performance contracts which reimburse service providers only when an individual is placed. Service providers are forced to select people that they know can be placed at the completion of training. Short term training means that there is not the time for support services and follow-up needed to help most high-risk youth.

The fifteen percent limitation on support services means that many youth--the teenage parent, the handicapped youth, the drug abuser or adjudicated youth--cannot be adequately served. In the past twenty years we have shown that even youth with severe barriers to employment such as retarded youth, dropouts, and teenage parents, can be served with enough time and resources. JTPA, with its strict limitation on support services, is excluding many

of those most in need. The independent sector assessment of JTPA found that in one third of the sites in their study, SDAs reduced the expenditures for support services below the fifteen percent maximum allowed by the Act.

Discussions with National Youth Employment Coalition members revealed the consequences of these cutbacks in support services. The Center for Population Options fears a reduction in the minimal level of pregnancy prevention information available to teenage women. Yet teenage pregnancy is increasingly seen as a predictor of low educational attainment, low earnings, lower job status, less job satisfaction, underemployment or unemployment, and welfare dependence. There is evidence that youth with clear educational or employment goals are less likely to have an unwanted pregnancy. Thus an employment and training program offers the opportunity to provide information and counseling as well as training and job placement which act as deterrents to teenage pregnancy.

Recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) are clearly intended to be served by JTPA. There is evidence that some AFDC recipients are being excluded,

presumably because they require more time and more services. There is a lawsuit in California charging discrimination against women because Los Angeles has recruited general assistance recipients, mostly men, into JTPA and has excluded AFDC recipients. The Children's Defense Fund is concerned because an opportunity is being lost to aid women who receive AFDC and make them self-sufficient with employment and training.

The restriction on JTPA funds for stipends and work experience limits the utility of the program for those youth who need some form of income support. Again, this was clearly the intent of JTPA. Unfortunately, there are youth who need some form of income in order to take advantage of education or training. The alternative is to drop out of school and work. This proves to be limiting in the long-run because the opportunities for school dropouts are far poorer than for high school graduates.

A New York human services agency said in response to the NYEC survey:

One of our greatest losses has been the

> elimination of the in-school work experience program. We believe that this program helped us to contain young people in school rather than encourage them to drop out.

JTPA has changed the focus of youth employment from those most in need to those most easily placed in jobs. It is logical given the restrictions and goals of the legislation that older youth will be served. Most youth will receive short-term training and placement on jobs, with no follow-up. Experience suggests that this may not add very much to long-term earnings. The success of programs like 70001 and Jobs for Youth is predicated on continued education and training of youth. Successful programs know the value of support and follow-up.

There may be a large number of youth with little education or hope that will not be served by JTPA. A Delaware youth program characterized the problem:

> We have become rigid in our intake process. We are taking fewer participants into the program and we are having to take students with higher test scores.

Does not our great nation have a responsibility to young people with severe problems?

EFFECT ON CBOs

JTPA is viewed by most CBOs with suspicion. It no longer contains the language of CETA which required special consideration for CBOs of demonstrated effectiveness. The priority for serving the disadvantaged has changed and that will not doubt affect CBOs. The new administrative structure and performance contracting radically change the nature of employment and training service delivery.

Let's step back and examine the creation, history and purpose of community-based organizations. Before 1960, there was no such term in the lexicon of human service or public policy. When the Manpower Development and Training Act was passed in 1962, its program design was very simple. The employment service would identify skills in demand, the vocational education system would train people, and the employment service would place them. It was designed to be a simple linear progression from unemployment to employment.

Reality tempered that simplistic policy. We discovered that discrimination based on race, sex, and age influenced hiring and that advocates were needed to break down the patterns of discrimination. The relationship between work and education became critical. We learned that people with bad health, low reading skills, minimal math skills, histories of juvenile delinquency, and no hope need more than vocational training to become employed. Many people learned more quickly by working and on-the job-training and work experience programs were designed to give young people the opportunity to discover work and build skills.

We learned that the poor, the disadvantaged, minorities, the handicapped, women, and many youth did not have faith in the established agencies as a result of their negative experiences with other institutions. Most community-based organizations evolved in response to these needs. Some are advocates of groups with special needs, some offer specialized services, some are located in communities that were not being served by public agencies, and some have developed unique ways of serving people. All have grown

in response to the needs of unemployed persons and, in the case of members of this Coalition, a concern for unemployed youth.

To illustrate the point I offer some examples: OIC grew from a selective patronage campaign which boycotted the products of employers who discriminated against black people. OIC created a new concept of training which was geared to serving the whole person. The National Urban League was a pioneer in the development of on-the-job training for the disadvantaged. The National Child Labor Committee evolved into a youth-serving agency from its original purpose of eliminating the abuses of child labor. 70001 and Jobs for Youth fused the needs of disadvantaged youth with the needs of employers to create youth employment agencies which serve young people who have been neglected by traditional education. The National Council of La Raza emerged from the Mexican-American barrios of the Southwest where young people faced unemployment due to lack of skills and English language proficiency. Today, it provides comprehensive services to the Hispanic community.

Community-based organizations have brought new and creative ideas to the employment and training field. CBOs are responsible for the concept of outreach--going into the community, churches, bars, pool halls, and street corners--to sell young people on the idea that they can improve their opportunities if they attend an employment and training program. CBOs created alternative types of services: they coupled OJT with pre-vocational training, expanded the concept and breadth of pre-vocational training, and made bilingual education a part of employment and training.

CBOs created special services to help people with special barriers to employment. Minorities, women, older workers, and the handicapped receive most of their employment services from CBOs. Unique programs were created by CBOs for displaced homemakers, minorities, and women in apprenticeship. New and different programs were created by CBOs to bring employers into the partnership to get jobs for the unemployed, to create alternative schools, to offer career education, to aid single parents and recipients of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and

to demonstrate that there is a relationship between teenage pregnancy and unemployment.

CBOs have been the leading advocates for equal employment opportunity, but, under JTPA, they are being asked to take fewer risks, to be more like the established agencies. That is the natural outcome of a system that ties payment to a narrowly defined or inflexible definition of success. It undoes the most vital service performed by CBOs--to be more flexible and less tied to the past, to be able to expand and contract rapidly, and to be willing to hire unique people, especially paraprofessional community people who can mobilize community enthusiasm and motivate people who have little hope and low self-esteem.

A Boston CBO responded to the NYEC survey:

> We believe in a holistic approach. We want to serve our clients in a humane and sensitive way. We don't want to treat them like objects...We believe that clients need to learn and grow at their own pace. Can you imagine asking a client to develop according to a contract period?

CBOs were created in response to a need to serve those outside the mainstream of our established institutions. No

matter how effective and efficient our schools and employment services become, they will never be able to serve everyone. We need CBOs to offer special services to people who just don't fit into the mold. Without a commitment to serve the most disadvantaged, we risk losing a generation of youth while we wait for the established agencies to reorient themselves to those most in need. We also risk losing skilled professionals and paraprofessionals who have been providing services in CBOs. Many have proven themselves effective professionals, but lack either the credentials or seniority to work in more established agencies.

HAS JTPA CAUSED CBOs TO CHANGE THEIR PROGRAM PRIORITIES?

JTPA has, by design, changed the program priorities of CBOs as well as everyone else in the employment and training field. The almost single purpose of providing trained workers for the private sector has eliminated the human resource development and human service goals that have been a part of employment and training services. The restrictions on work experience have eliminated a vital and successful tool in serving young people. How

do young people get the job experience that all employers require? Who hires a kid on his or her first job?

JTPA has given priority to serving the job-ready or nearly job-ready. In the short run, the return on investment is greater for these people. CBOs are being asked to behave just like the vocational schools and community colleges, and then they are being criticized for being less professional, for having fewer credentialed teachers and older equipment. Someone is missing the point: CBOs are <u>not</u> competing with schools. They are helping people who will either not attend or not be accepted by traditional education agencies. If CBOs act and look like schools, they won't be able to help these people either.

CBO programs have less remediation and skill development. They are serving fewer handicapped people, fewer offenders and former drug abusers, and fewer teenage parents because these people require more service at greater cost. And even with that investment, these young people may not be as attractive to employers as other unemployed youth.

CBOs have always been a vehicle for reaching out to people who have not used employment and training services. They have gone into their communities to bring people into programs. Today JTPA is using more centralized outreach techniques and is less interested in finding the hard to reach youth.

A New York program commented:

> Under JTPA there are allowable program designs, such as exemplary youth programs. Our SDA found these programs not to be cost effective and fund only three program types: classroom training, on the job training, and limited work experience. Eventually only two program types will exist and the SDA will be held accountable for having created "boiler plate" programs that many youth will not be able to function under.

In the short run, CBOs are faced with a dilemma and a challenge. They must alter their service to meet the new goals of JTPA. For many CBOs there is a conflict between the business principle of staying alive and the commitment to serve those most in need. CBOs must generate income in order to keep their institution alive and well. This may require servin~ a different clientele, modifying services, and learning to operate within the limits of a performance-based contract.

The challenge facing CBOs is to raise supplemental funds or find volunteers to maintain the level of assistance necessary to serve to those most in need. The change in priorities under JTPA increases the demand for services to the most disadvantaged. CBOs are struggling to meet these needs. In the long run, CBOs must make the public aware of the problems of high-risk youth and the potential benefits to society of serving them.

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL CBOs

National CBOs, such as the National Urban League, National Council of La Raza, 70001, and OIC, are facing new challenges and new roles under JTPA. JTPA has decentralized the delivery of services even more than under CETA. The states have the major policy and planning function that was once the responsibility of the U.S. Department of Labor. There are now fifty different policies, fifty sources of technical assistance, and fifty different plans and priorities under JTPA.

The major functions of national CBOs have been to

develop national resources, gather knowledge, and disseminate the resources and knowledge to affiliates and other agencies. There are different models of technical assistance represented by the NYEC. The National Urban League, OIC, and 70001 have local affiliates and are committed to helping them improve the quality and quantity of their services. They provide a broad range of assistance and have also developed national model programs which have been tested in one or more affiliates.

The Center for Community Change has served a broad cross-section of unaffiliated community-based organizations in almost every state. A third model for technical assistance delivery is Jobs for Youth. They evolve from a youth service agency in Boston, New York, and Chicago to a practitioner-to-practitioner technical assistance service based in Boston. They have contracted with youth employment agencies to send Jobs for Youth line staff to train and assist line staff in other agencies. The Youth Practitioners Network has also organized a practitioner-based one-on-one technical assistance and information service.

New legislation and new directions always create a demand for information. National CBOs have been hindered in providing assistance by the lack of information available to them under the new system. The newness of JTPA systems, policies, and programs accounted for much of the information gap, the traditional providers of information to CBOs have much less staff to provide the technical information they have amassed. OIC, the National Urban League, 70001, National Council of La Raza, Youth Practitioners Network, and HRDI have all lost funding and staff. The rationale is that JTPA has changed the national focus to a state focus and the federal government is no longer in the national information business.

The National Youth Employment Coalition has brought a group of major, national, youth-serving agencies together. We have learned from each other, helped each other and collectively worked toward improving employment and training services to youth. Individual agency technical assistance capability has improved as a result of this relationship. We must continue to broaden the base of the coalition. We must reach out to public agencies that are committed to

serving youth or improving the capacity of youth employment agencies. There must be a system for collection and dissemination of program information affecting youth and adult employment.

CONCLUSION

The changes recommended in this paper would go a long way toward making JTPA more responsive to the needs of disadvantaged youth. JTPA has created a local system capable of responding to the needs of employers. Employers are heavily involved in developing plans and programs that meet their needs. This is progress. Now, we must find a way to maintain the level of employer involvement in the process of serving disadvantaged youth. We must join employers, educators, state and local government and community-based organizations together to recruit, train and place high-risk youth. Together, we can serve those with severe problems, improve our methods and programs, and serve more youth.

CBOs such as OIC, the National Urban League, the

National Child Labor Committee, 70001, the National Council of La Raza, Jobs for Youth, and other members of the National Youth Employment Coalition have long advocated private-sector involvement, and our programs have always enjoyed a high level of employer support. It is our experience that the private sector can be mobilized to serve high-risk youth. Let us work toward redirecting JTPA toward that end and toward creating a dynamic program geared to the needs of poor and disadvantaged youth.